



City of Grand Rapids

First year of Grand Rapids' pedestrian safety campaign deemed successful

Initial education phase concludes to reduce pedestrian-involved crashes with motor vehicles

10/02/17: GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – City officials are calling the first phase of the Grand Rapids' first-ever pedestrian safety campaign successful. During the two-week campaign, police officers observed pedestrian/motorist interactions at nine high-visibility enforcement zones. Over the course of 351 hours, officers stopped 2,077 vehicles and provided warnings and education to motorists about pedestrian safety laws.

The campaign also surveyed residents to gain insight about awareness and perceptions of pedestrian safety laws.

The survey of 376 Greater Grand Rapids adults conducted between Aug. 24 and Sept. 7 found that:

- 60 percent of respondents considered themselves “very familiar” with rules drivers must follow when encountering pedestrians. Only 40 percent considered themselves “very familiar” with the rules pedestrians must follow.
- More than 60 percent “strongly” or “somewhat agree” that Grand Rapids' walking infrastructure (sidewalks, streetlights, crosswalks, etc.) is adequate for the community.
- 70 percent of people know that pedestrians should walk against traffic if they must walk in the road. However, 30 percent still think walking with the flow of traffic like a bicycle is also correct.
- Nearly everyone (93 percent) uses sidewalks when available. They also look both ways before crossing a road (97 percent). However, other safety behaviors are less universal. Only 72 percent say that they always or most of the time make eye contact with a driver before crossing a road.

“This was a great first step in our ongoing effort to create a culture of respect for all road users – pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers,” said Grand Rapids Traffic Safety Manager Chris Zull.

The most common causes of pedestrian-involved crashes with motor vehicles include motorists not yielding to pedestrians, and pedestrians not using crosswalks while crossing streets. Zull said that the data collected in this information-gathering phase will help the City develop a pedestrian safety comprehensive plan.

Ron Van Houten, a psychology professor and traffic and pedestrian safety expert at Western Michigan University, identified the crosswalk intersections for the study, which included:



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- Lake Dr & Atlas Ave SE
- Fuller Ave & Thomas St SE
- Burton St & Chesaning Ave SE
- Hall St & Giddings Ave SE
- Plymouth Ave & Service Rd NE
- Leonard St & Davis Ave NW
- Covell Ave & Tremont Blvd NW
- Walker Ave & Fremont Ave NW
- E. Fulton St & Alten Ave

A \$120,000 Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning grant funded this first phase of the multipronged initiative.

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